

Welcome to HILL County!

We are excited to have you as an employee of Hill County. You were hired because the elected official, appointed official or department head believes you can contribute to the success of Hill County, and share our commitment to serving the public and our constituents with excellence.

Hill County is committed to providing excellent service to the public in all of our county offices. As part of the team, we hope you will discover that the pursuit of excellence is a rewarding aspect of your career here.

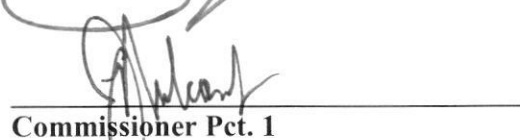
This employee handbook contains some key policies, benefits, and expectations of Hill County, and other information you will need. Each elected or appointed official may have detailed policy and procedures manuals for their office.

Your job is essential to fulfilling our mission of serving our county constituents every day and to meet or exceed their expectations. We achieve this through dedicated hard work and commitment from every Hill County employee. You should use this handbook as a ready reference as you pursue your career with Hill County. Please consult with your elected official, appointed official or department head regarding questions you may have concerning this employee handbook.

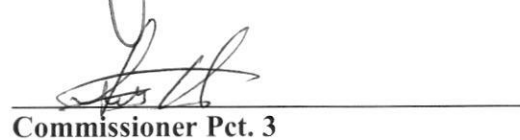
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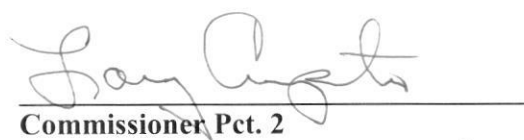
County Judge



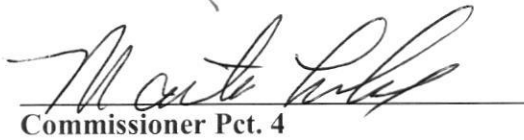
Commissioner Pct. 1



Commissioner Pct. 3



Commissioner Pct. 2



Commissioner Pct. 4

HILL COUNTY
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



HILL COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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Welcome aboard!

County Judge

Commissioner Pct. 1

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SECTION 1: GENERAL POLICIES

A. County Employment

1A-1 NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

Hill County operates under the legal doctrine of ‘employment-at-will’ and, within requirements of state and federal law regarding employment, can dismiss any employee at any time, with or without notice, for any legal reason or no reason. These personnel policies do not constitute an employment agreement between the County and any of its employees and in no way limit or restrict the at-will nature of employment. Hill County has the right to change these policies at any time, without prior notice to employees. Any employee who violates any of the policies of Hill County, shall be subject to disciplinary measures including discharge, at the supervisor’s discretion.

Each reference in these policies to the County means Hill County, Texas.

Other County officials and department heads may have additional policies governing their employees. Be sure to check with your supervisor or department head if you need more details to see policies, if any, which are applicable to you. If you need more details on the County-wide policies, consult your supervisor or department head.

1A-2 POLICY ON DISSEMINATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

A master Hill County Employee Handbook, which contains the original of all personnel policies of Hill County, will be maintained in the County Auditor’s office. All employees will have access to the Hill County Employee Handbook through the county website at co.hill.tx.us. Each employee must sign an Employee Handbook Acknowledgement on the first day of employment which will be retained by the Treasurer’s Office in their personnel file.

1A-3 PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

PURPOSE - The purpose of this handbook is to develop a system which will provide uniform personnel guidelines for all the employees of Hill County. It is hoped that these guidelines will promote a high degree of understanding, cooperation, and unity between the Elected Officials of this County and you, its personnel.

As such, this Employee Handbook is designed to create and maintain a modern and comprehensive system of personnel administration; increase efficiency and economy in the service of Hill County; establish a system of fairness and equity for the employee and taxpayer alike; and encourage high morale among County personnel by providing good working relationships.

APPLICABILITY - The policies created in this handbook are designed to apply to all employees in the service of Hill County. They shall not, however, apply to those individuals or areas of the job which are regulated by Statute.

1A-4 EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL

All employment with Hill County shall be considered ‘at will’ employment. No contract of

employment shall exist between any individual and Hill County for any duration, either specified or unspecified. No provision of this employee handbook shall be construed as modifying your employment 'at will' status.

Hill County shall have the right to terminate the employment of any employee for any legal reason, or no reason, at any time, either with or without notice.

Hill County shall also have the right to change any condition, benefit, policy, or privilege of employment at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Employees of Hill County shall have the right to leave their employment with the County at any time, with or without notice.

Hill County reserves the right to change the provisions of this handbook at any time, with or without notice. The provisions of this policy do not constitute an employment contract.

1A-5 EMPLOYEE STATUS

Each county position has an employee status that identifies how the position is paid and how benefits are granted by Commissioners Court. The status of an employee cannot be changed without the approval of the Commissioners Court. This policy defines both health insurance and retirement benefits. Full time employees will be eligible for health insurance. All other classifications must be included in the county initial and/or standard measurement periods for the Affordable Care Act.

All regular employees (full time, part time, and regular variable hour) shall be eligible for the retirement benefit offered through the Texas County and District Retirement System. Temporary seasonal and temporary short term part time employees will not be eligible for retirement benefits. Eligible employees shall make contributions to the retirement program through a system of payroll deduction.

Regular Full Time: A full time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of at least thirty (30) hours per week. Full time employees are eligible for county health insurance and retirement benefits. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits. Employees may be non-exempt, hourly employees or exempt employees. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation. Hill County makes exempt status determination based on the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Regular Part Time: A part time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week. All regular part time employees must be placed on TCDRS retirement regardless of the number of hours worked per week. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Temporary Seasonal: A seasonal employee shall be any employee who is hired into a position that lasts six (6) or less months and begins at approximately the same time each year. Examples may include, but are not limited to, lifeguards, summer mowers, and election workers. The county must define and document the season that the employee is being hired for. Seasonal employees can be either part time or full time, and they do not qualify for health insurance through the county under the

Affordable Care Act. Temporary seasonal employees are not eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Regular Variable Hour: A variable hour employee shall be any employee for whom the county cannot determine the average amount of hours that the employee will work each week – hours are variable or indeterminate at the time of the employee’s start date. If the employee works an average of thirty (30) or more hours a week in the measurement period, the employee will be eligible for health insurance through the county under the Affordable Care Act. If an employee’s schedule becomes regular, then the employee shall be reclassified as full or part time depending on the hours worked. Regular variable hour employees are eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Temporary Part Time: A temporary short term part time employee shall be any employee who is expected to work less than thirty (30) hours each week in a position that is expected to last for a specific period of time or until a specific project is completed, but no longer than 12 months. If this project goes beyond 12 months, the employee will move into a regular part time status. Temporary short term part time employees are not entitled to any benefits under the Affordable Care Act and are also not eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

A part time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week. All regular part time employees must be placed on TCDRS retirement regardless of the number of hours worked per week. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Election Workers: An election worker shall be an employee paid to work during elections held by the county. This position will be expected to last for a specific period or until elections are completed. If the Election worker works more than 40 hours, they will be paid Overtime.

County Employees that work elections and work over 40 hours a week, will be paid the weighted average.

Elected Officials shall not work an election according to Election Code 32.052.

1A-6 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Hill County is an equal opportunity employer. The county will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender status, age, genetic information, pregnancy, veteran status, disability, or any other condition or status protected by law in hiring, promotion, demotion, raises, termination, training, discipline, use of employee facilities or programs, or any other benefit, condition, or privilege of employment except where required by state or federal law or where a bona fide occupational qualification exists. If an employee needs an accommodation as a result of a condition or status protected by law, please advise your elected official, appointed official, department head or the county attorney

1A-7 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT

It is the policy of Hill County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of

employees on the basis of a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels he or she has been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to your elected official, appointed official, department head or the county attorney. All elected officials, appointed officials, department heads and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge are instructed to treat the employee's disability with confidentiality.

It is Hill County's policy to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the county. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (ADAAA), reasonable accommodations may be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are necessary to enable them to perform the essential functions of their jobs, or to enjoy the equal benefits and privileges of employment. This policy applies to all applicants for employment, and all employees. If you require accommodation, please contact your elected official, appointed official, department head or the county attorney. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

1A-8 APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Job Announcements: Announcements for job openings with the County may include, but are not limited to, advertisements in local newspapers, registration with the Texas Workforce Commission, or posting on Hill County Courthouse bulletin boards, or the official county website (co.hill.tx.us).

Each official having a job opening shall be responsible for determining how that opening will be announced.

Application Procedure: Before an individual can be considered to be an applicant for employment with the County, he/she shall be required to complete a Hill County employment application. Copies of Hill County's employment application are available from the County Treasurer's Office and may be picked up at any time during normal working hours for that office. Employment applications are also available from the official county website (co.hill.tx.us)

Hill County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) employees are required to complete a more comprehensive personal history statement/application that adheres to TCOLE requirements. Therefore, HCSO applicants are exempt from completing the normal Hill County Employee application.

Selection: Each elected or appointed official, or his/her designee, shall be responsible for selecting the applicant for an open position in his/her department.

Processing: The Treasurer's Office shall be notified of who is being hired, the proposed starting date, pay rate, and provided with the original employment application. The employee should be told to report to the Treasurer's Office for processing before their first day of employment. An I-9 is required to be on file before an employee may begin to work.

Disqualification: Reasons for which an applicant may be disqualified for consideration for employment may include, but not be limited to, the following - the applicant does not meet minimum qualifications necessary to perform the duties of the position for which he/she is applying; the

applicant has made a false statement on the application form or any other document related to or which has a bearing on the selection process; the applicant has committed or attempted to commit a fraudulent act at any stage of the application process; or the applicant is not legally permitted to hold the position.

1A-9 PERSONNEL FILES

The Hill County Treasurer's Office will retain basic employee information in an individual personnel file. This file will include all pertinent employment documents such as resume, application, as well as, records concerning performance, discipline and compensation.

It is important that the personnel records of Hill County be accurate at all times. In order to avoid issues, compromising your benefit eligibility or having W2's returned, Hill County requests employees to promptly notify the Treasurer/Human Resource Director and their Department Head of any change in name, home address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, emergency contact information or of any other pertinent information.

The Public Information Act allows county employees to keep their home addresses, home telephone numbers, social security numbers, emergency contact information, and information that reveals whether the employee has family members confidential. Employees may keep this information private by requesting in writing not to allow this information to be released to the public no later than 14 days after their first day of employment.

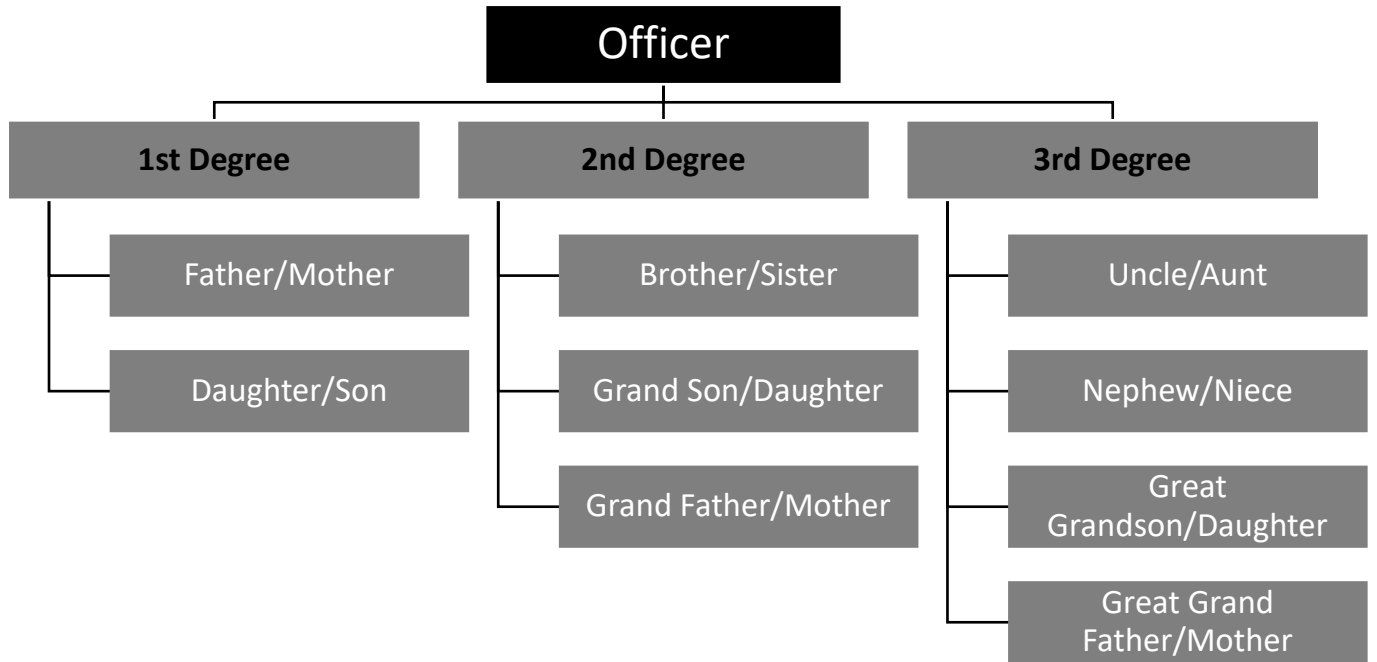
1A-10 NEPOTISM

Texas Government Code Chapter 573, a Public Official of Hill County is prohibited from hiring a relative related in the third degree of consanguinity (blood) or the second degree of affinity (marriage) to work in a department that he or she supervises or exercises control over.

A degree of relationship is determined under Texas Government Code Chapter 573.

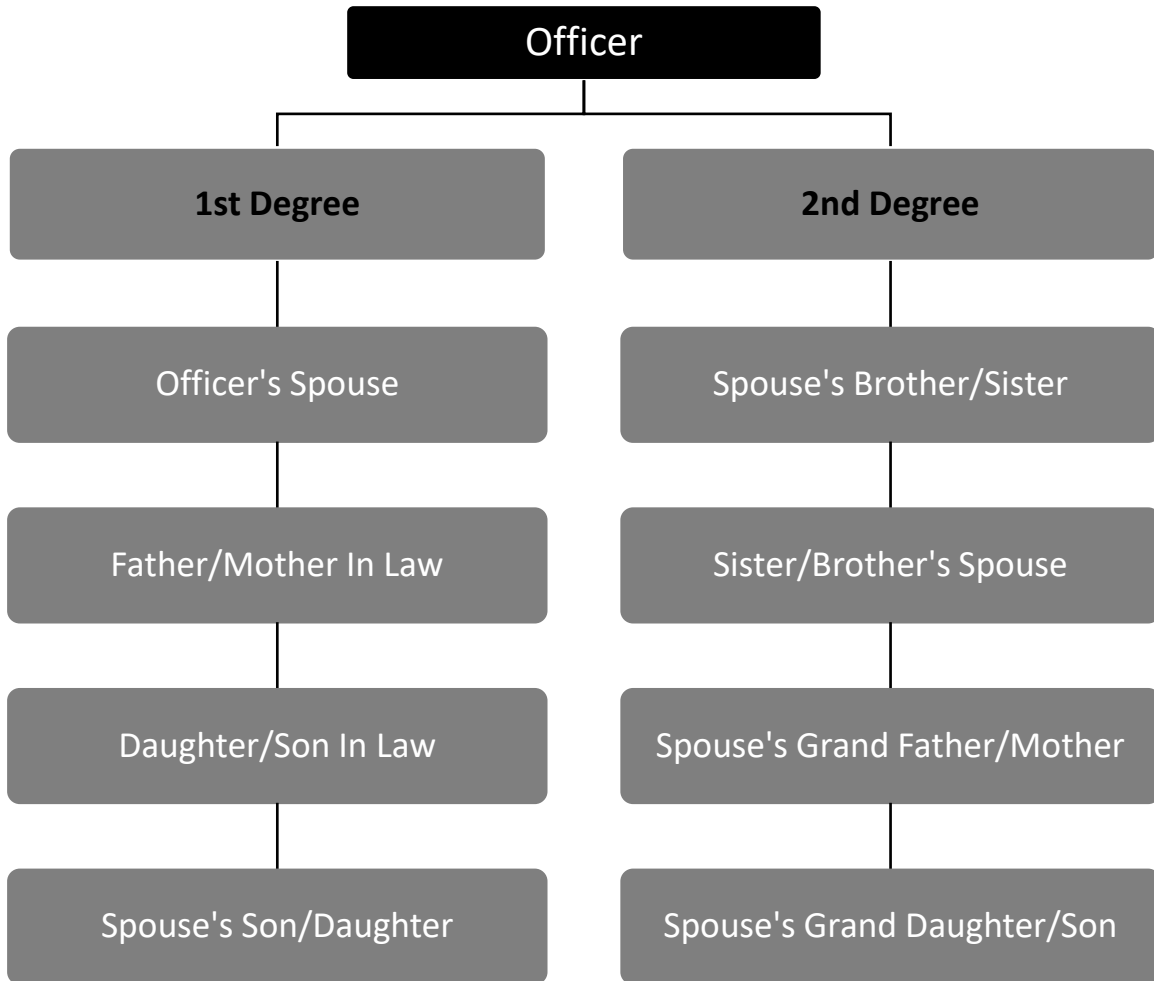
CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Blood)



AFFINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Marriage)



B. WORK RULES AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1B-1 ATTENDANCE

As a Hill County employee you are expected to be punctual and demonstrate consistent attendance.

Each employee shall report to work on each day they are scheduled to work and at the starting time set by their supervisor unless prior approval for absence is given by the supervisor or the employee is unable to report for work because of circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

If an employee is unable to be at work at their normal reporting time, they shall be responsible for notifying their supervisor at least 2 hour(s) prior to the scheduled start of their shift or as soon as it is reasonably practicable in the case of an emergency.

Each employee shall remain on the job until the normal quitting time established by the supervisor unless permission to leave early is given by the supervisor.

Each supervisor is responsible for determining if an unscheduled absence or tardiness is to be classified as excused or unexcused, based on the circumstances causing the absence or tardiness.

Frequent unexcused absences or tardiness, as determined by your immediate supervisor, may make an employee subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.

An employee who does not report for work for three (3) consecutive scheduled work days, and who fails to notify his or her supervisor, shall be considered to have resigned their position by abandonment.

1B-2 DRESS CODE

Hill County expects all employees to be well groomed, clean, and neat at all times. Each department head will determine the type of attire that is acceptable.

You are required to act in a professional manner at all times and extend the highest courtesy to co-workers and to the public being served. Be mindful that a cheerful and positive attitude is essential to our commitment to customer service.

1B-3 TOBACCO/SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

Hill County endeavors to provide a healthy environment. Therefore, any form of tobacco or vaping consumed in county buildings and county vehicles is strictly prohibited. Additionally, no smoking or vaping is allowed within fifteen (15) feet of the exterior entranceways.

Employees may not use or display vaping devices in county buildings or vehicles nor may they charge vaping devices on county property.

1B-4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees of Hill County shall not engage in any employment, relationship, or activity which could be viewed as a conflict of interest because of the potential or appearance of affecting the employee's

job efficiency, or which would reduce their ability to make objective decisions in regard to their work and responsibility as a Hill County employee.

Employees involved in conflict of interest situations shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination and these actions may have criminal consequences for employees.

Activities which constitute a conflict of interest shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit, gift, or favor, other than from the County, that might reasonably tend to influence the employee's performance of duties for the County or that the employee knows or should know is offered with the intent to influence the employee's performance;
- 2) Accepting employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired in the performance of official duties;
- 3) Accepting outside employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to impair independence of judgment in performance of duties for the County;
- 4) Making any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and their duties for the County; or
- 5) Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit from another person in exchange for having performed duties as a County employee in favor of that person.

1B-5 HARASSMENT and BULLYING

Hill County is committed to a workplace free of harassment and bullying. Harassment and bullying includes unlawful, unwelcome words, acts or displays based on sex, including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender status, sexual orientation or gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, pregnancy, disability, family or military leave status or veteran's status. Such conduct becomes harassment when (1) the submission to the conduct is made a condition of employment; (2) the submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the conduct creates an offensive, intimidating or hostile working environment or interferes with work performance.

Workplace bullying includes negative acts directed toward employees. Examples could include but not limited to:

- Intimidating or undermining employees by demeaning their work standards, not giving them credit, setting them up for failure and constantly reminding them of old mistakes.
- Threatening employees' personal self esteem and work status.
- Isolating employees from opportunities, information, and interaction with others.
- Giving impossible deadlines, creating undue pressure and stress, and overworking employees
- Giving constant and unfair criticism
- Blaming without factual justification
- Making unreasonable demands
- Giving hostile glares and other intimidating gestures
- Yelling, screaming, and swearing
- Purposely excluding or isolating a coworker
- Sending aggressive emails or notes
- Monopolizing supplies and other resources

- Engaging in excessive social bantering, teasing, and humiliation
- Deliberately insulting others and taking part in behind-the-back put downs
- Monitoring another excessively
- Stealing credit for other employees' work

Harassment and bullying is strictly prohibited by Hill County whether committed by an elected official, appointed official, department head, co-worker or non-employee with whom the county does business.

Employees who feel they have been harassed or bullied should immediately report the situation to the elected official, appointed official or department head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the harassment or bullying to the official or department head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge, to the County Attorney, or the County Treasurer.

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. While all claims of harassment and bullying shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality. The official or department head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

Once the investigation is complete, the employee making the claim shall be notified of the result of the investigation and any actions which are to be taken.

Retaliation against an employee who reports harassment or bullying or who cooperates in the investigation is prohibited by law as well as this policy. Employees who feel they have been subjected to illegal retaliation should immediately report the situation to the elected official, appointed official, or department head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the retaliation to the official or department head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge, to the County Attorney, or to the County Treasurer.

Remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances when the county determines unlawful harassment or retaliation has occurred, up to and including termination.

1B-6 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited by Hill County, whether committed by elected official, appointed official, department head, co-worker or non-employee the county does business with. It is the policy of Hill County to provide a work place free from sexual harassment for all employees and to take active steps to eliminate any sexual harassment of which the County becomes aware.

Employees engaging in sexual harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which includes slurs, jokes, statements, gestures, touching, pictures, emails or cartoons where: (1) the submission to such conduct is either an expressed or implied condition of

employment; or (2) the submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed person; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an affected person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

All claims of sexual harassment shall be taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly. While all claims of sexual harassment shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality.

Employees who feel they have been sexually harassed should immediately report the situation to the elected or appointed official who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the harassment to the department head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge, the County Attorney, or County Treasurer.

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The official or department head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

Once the investigation is complete, the employee making the claim shall be notified of the result of the investigation and any actions which are to be taken.

Use the following procedures so that your complaint may be resolved quickly and fairly.

- a. When practical, confront the harasser and ask them to stop the unwanted behavior.
- b. Record the time, place and specifics of each incident, including any witnesses.
- c. Report continuing sexual harassment to the Elected Official or Appointed Official who is responsible for your department or to the County Judge, the County Attorney, or the County Treasurer.
- d. If a thorough investigation reveals that unlawful sexual harassment has occurred, Hill County will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances, up to and including termination.

Retaliation against an employee who reports sexual harassment or who cooperates as a witness in the investigation is prohibited by law as well as this policy.

Employees who feel they have been subjected to illegal retaliation should immediately report the situation to the elected or appointed official who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the retaliation to the department head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge, the County Attorney, or the County Treasurer.

Reporting or failing to report claims in accordance with the procedure given in this policy shall not

limit other legal recourse an employee may have in regard to sexual harassment charges.

1B-7 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Employees of Hill County shall have the right to support candidates of their choice and to engage in political activity during their personal time.

County employees shall not: 1) Use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination for office; 2) Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise another person to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political reason; or 3) Use any equipment, property or material owned by the County for political activity or engage in political activity while on duty for the County.

In the event that an employee chooses to run against an incumbent for an elected position in the office for which they work, they must resign at the time they file for any primary election, the date of filing of a write-in petition, or at the time they are nominated for the sought after elected position, whichever comes first.

1B-8 GRIEVANCES

Any employee having a grievance related to his/her job should provide that grievance in writing, and discuss the grievance with his/her immediate supervisor within 5 days of the action causing the grievance.

If the discussion with the immediate supervisor does not resolve the grievance, and, if the immediate supervisor is not the elected or appointed official with final responsibility for the employee's department, the employee shall have the right to discuss the grievance with that official within 5 days from the discussion with the immediate supervisor.

The decision of the elected or appointed official with final responsibility for the employee's department shall be final in all grievances.

1B-9 BREAKS

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act amended the Fair Labor Standards Act to require reasonable breaks for nursing mothers to express breast milk. The Texas Right to Express Breast Milk in the Workplace Act also imposes duties on public employers and, under other state law, is applicable for the duration of a nursing mother's need to express breast milk. Hill County supports the practice of expressing breast milk.

Hill County will provide reasonable unpaid breaks for a nursing mother to express breast milk. The nursing mother will be allowed whatever time is needed to express breast milk.

The County will provide the nursing mother with a private location, other than a bathroom. The location will be shielded from view and free from intrusion and appropriate for expressing breast milk. The specific location will be determined on a case by case basis.

Hill County does not allow any retaliation against a nursing mother for asking for this break. Nursing mothers are entitled to this break for the duration of the time they are expressing breast milk. A reasonable accommodation will be given for the needs of employees who express breast milk. An employee of the county who needs to express breast milk may not be discriminated against.

All other employee breaks are determined by each official or department head and are not required to be given. If your department provides you with a break, it may not be accumulated or used for time off. The Fair Labor Standards Act does not require any breaks other than for a nursing mother; however, if paid breaks are provided for employees, a nursing mother must be given the same amount of paid break time.

1B-10A DISCIPLINE

Each supervisor shall have the authority to administer discipline to employees in their department for poor performance, violation of policies, disruptive behavior, or any other behavior or activity which the supervisor feels is not acceptable as it relates to the employee's job or the best interest of the department or County.

Depending on the severity of the situation, discipline may range from informal counseling up to and including immediate termination.

All County employees are “at will” employees and nothing in this policy gives an employee any contract of employment, guarantee of any duration of employment, or any other property interest in their job.

Hill County retains the right to terminate the employment of any individual at any time for any legal reason, or no reason, with or without notice. The County also retains the right to change any condition, benefit, privilege, or policy of employment at any time, with or without notice.

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1B-10 LICENSE AND CERTIFICATIONS

Hill County has many positions that require licenses and certifications. It is the responsibility of each

employee to maintain all required licenses and certifications. If an employee is unable to renew or loses a license or certification, they must immediately notify their supervisor. If this license is a requirement for the position, the employee may be demoted, transferred or terminated. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to continue in the position where a license or certification is required if failure to have such license or certification is illegal under either Federal or State Law.

1B-11 WEATHER CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

As a general practice, Hill County does not close its operations unless the health, safety, and security of county employees are seriously brought into question. When this happens, either because of severe weather conditions or other emergencies, it can disrupt County operations, and the County Judge is responsible for initiating the closing.

The County Judge will notify the following entities for a public announcement: County Website, KHBR, EMC Call System. Announcements of an emergency closing will, to the extent possible, specify the starting and ending times of the closing. However, each elected or appointed official controls the working hours of their employees, even in an emergency situation.

Many county departments are continuous operating public safety and service departments. Many county personnel will be required to work during emergency closings. Each department head is responsible for designating their own employees and providing alternate information to personnel designated as essential during emergency closings. Public safety will be foremost in the development of departmental emergency action plans.

Employees generally are expected to report for work during inclement weather conditions if the County does not declare an emergency closing. Nonexempt employees who are unable to report because of weather conditions will be granted an authorized unpaid absence, or, if they have accrued PTO, they may take a day of paid leave. Nonexempt employees who are late because of weather conditions will be given a chance to make up their missed time if work schedules and conditions permit.

1B-12 CONFIDENTIALITY

Hill County is a public entity, however, some county employees acquire confidential (confidential, non-public) information as a result of their position with the county. This information must be protected. Employees who reveal confidential (confidential, non-public) information they have received as a result of their position may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Regarding the personnel information on employees of Hill County; much of the information in an employee's personnel file, including salary and job evaluations is subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act, however, highly personal matters are typically not subject to disclosure. The county will adhere to the Public Information Act requirements.

1B-13 WHISTLEBLOWER

An employee may, in good faith, report an alleged violation of a Hill County Policy or federal or state law to his or her supervisor, department head, or County Attorney, unless all of these persons are the alleged perpetrators of the alleged violation of policy or law. If all of the listed persons are alleged to be involved in the violation, the employee may report the allegation to the District Attorney, or Sheriff. The county will investigate the reported activity.

An official, supervisor, department director, or any other employee is prohibited from taking adverse employment action against an employee who, in good faith, reports an alleged violation of County policy or federal or state law to a designated person, pursuant to this policy.

An employee who intentionally makes a false report of wrongdoing may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

An employee who, in good faith, believes he or she is being subjected to retaliation based on a report of alleged wrongdoing under this policy should immediately contact the County Judge, County Attorney, or Sheriff.

An employee with a question regarding this policy should contact the County Attorney.

1B-14 FRAUD PREVENTION AND DETECTION

Hill County is committed to preventing fraud. All County employees must share in this commitment. County employees, especially supervisors, Department Heads, Elected Officials and Appointed Officials, must be aware of the circumstances, or “red flags”, which lead to fraud. For the purpose of this administrative procedure, fraud and intentional waste are referred to as “fraud”.

Fraud occurs for the following reasons (note: there are multiple reasons in some cases):

- Poor internal controls
- Management override of internal controls
- Type of organization (industry with high risk of fraud)
- Collusion between employees and third parties
- Poor or non-existent company ethical standards
- Lack of control over managers by their supervisors

Frequently cited “red flags” of fraud are:

- Changes in an employee’s lifestyle, spending habits or behavior
- Poorly written or poorly enforced internal controls, procedures, policies or securities
- Irregular/unexplained variances in financial information
- Inventory shortages
- Failure to take action on results of internal/external audits or review
- Unusually high expenses or purchase
- Frequent complaints from customers
- Missing files

- Ignored employee comments concerning possible fraud

Perpetrators of fraud typically live beyond their reasonably available means. Other indicators of fraud include the borrowing of small amounts of money from co-workers, collectors or creditors appearing at the place of business, excessive use of telephone to stall creditors, falsifying records, refusing to leave custody of records during the days, working excessive overtime, refusing vacations, and excessively rewriting records under the guise of neatness.

The following internal controls help prevent fraud:

- Adherence to all organizational procedures, especially those concerning documentation and authorization of transactions.
- Physical security over assets such as locking doors and restricting access to certain areas
- Proper training of employees
- Independent review and monitoring of tasks
- Separation of duties so that no one employee is responsible for a transaction from start to finish
- Clear lines of authority
- Conflict of interest statements which are enforced
- Rotation of duties in positions more susceptible to fraud
- Ensuring that employees take regular vacations
- Regular independent audits of areas susceptible to fraud

The purpose of these administrative procedures is to define what constitutes fraud, and to outline rules and procedures all employees must follow when fraud is suspected.

This procedure applies to all Hill County employees and Elected Officials.

DEFINITIONS:

Fraud – Theft, intentional waste or abuse of County funds, property or time. Specific examples of fraud include but are not limited to:

- Theft of County funds.
- Serious abuse of County time as unauthorized time away from work or excess use of County time for personal business.
- Unauthorized use or misuse of County property or records.
- Falsification of records.
- Theft or unauthorized removal of County records, County property or the property of other persons (to include the property of employees, supervisors, consumers, clients, customers, inmates or visitors).
- Willful destruction or damage of County records, County property or the property of others (to include the property of employees, supervisors, consumers, clients, customers, inmates or visitors).
- Neglecting or subverting job responsibilities in exchange for an actual or promised reward.

County funds – Currency, checks, or other negotiable instruments belonging to the County of Hill, or for which the County is the fiscal agent or has a fiduciary responsibility.

County property – Any tangible item owned by the County of Hill.

Retaliation – When an individual is discriminated against or penalized for reporting fraud or for cooperating, giving testimony, or participating in any manner in an audit/investigation, proceeding, or hearing.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Employees/Department Heads – Any employee who has knowledge of an occurrence of fraud, or has reason to suspect that a fraud has occurred, shall immediately notify his/her supervisor. If the employee has reason to believe that the employee's supervisor may be involved, the employee shall immediately notify the Department Head/Elected Official of his/her department. However, if the employee has reason to suspect that the Department Head/Elected Official may also be involved, the employee should contact the County Auditor, District Attorney or County Attorney. Every employee shall cooperate with administrative investigations pursuant to this administrative procedure. The employee shall not discuss the matter with anyone other than his/her supervisor, the Department Head/Elected Official, the County Auditor and the District Attorney or County Attorney. Failure to report suspected fraud could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Supervisor – Upon notification from an employee of suspected fraud, or if the supervisor has reason to suspect that a fraud has occurred, the supervisor shall immediately notify the Department Director/Elected Official of his/her department. The supervisor shall not attempt to investigate the suspected fraud or to discuss the matter with anyone other than the Department Head/Elected Official, the County Auditor and the District Attorney or County Attorney. Failure to report suspected fraud could result in disciplinary action or possibly termination.

Elected Official – Upon notification from an employee or supervisor of suspected fraud, or if the Elected Official has reason to suspect that a fraud has occurred, the Elected Official shall immediately contact the County Auditor. The Elected Official shall not attempt to investigate the suspected fraud or to discuss the matter with anyone other than the County Auditor, District Attorney or County Attorney.

Internal Audit – Upon notification or discovery of a suspected fraud, the County Auditor will promptly coordinate investigation of possible fraud with the District Attorney or County Attorney.

PROCEDURES

Record Security – A successful audit/investigation can only be performed if the documentation relating to an alleged fraud is available for review in its original form. Therefore, once a suspected fraud is reported, Department Heads/Elected Officials and supervisors shall take immediate action to prevent the theft, alteration, or destruction of relevant records. Such actions include, but are not necessarily limited to removing the records and placing them in a secure location, limiting access to the location where the records currently exist, and preventing the individual suspected of committing

the fraud from having access to the records. The records must be adequately secured until the County Auditor obtains the records to begin the audit investigation.

Contacts/Protocols – After an initial review and a determination that the suspected fraud warrants additional investigation, the County Auditor and the Commissioners Court, Treasurer and District Attorney or County Attorney of the allegations. The County Auditor shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate law enforcement officials and shall report its investigation findings as described below.

Confidentiality – All participants in a fraud investigation shall keep the details and results of the investigation confidential except as expressly provided in this administrative procedure. However, the County Auditor and District Attorney or County Attorney may discuss the investigation with any person if such discussion would further the investigation.

Personnel Actions – If a suspicion of fraud is substantiated by the audit investigation, disciplinary action shall be taken in conformance with the County’s Employee Handbook. A false and vindictive allegation of fraud is a violation of the administrative procedure. All violations of this administrative procedure, including violations of the confidentiality provisions, shall result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

Retaliation – it is a violation of this administrative procedure for any individual to be discriminated against for reporting fraud or for cooperating, giving testimony, or participating in an audit investigation, proceeding, or hearing. Such individuals fall under the protection of the Whistleblower Act II.

Media Issues – If the media becomes aware of an audit investigation, the appropriate supervisor or Department Head/Elected Official shall refer the media to the District Attorney or County Attorney. The alleged fraud and audit investigation shall not be discussed with the media other than through the District Attorney or County Attorney’s office.

DISPOSITION OF INVESTIGATION

At the conclusion of the audit investigation, the County Auditor and District Attorney’s office or County Attorney’s office will document the results in a confidential memorandum report to the Commissioners’ Court and Department Head/Elected Official. If the report concludes that the allegations are founded, the report will be copied to the Treasurer.

If the fraud resulted in County property loss, the County Auditor shall report such loss to the Commissioners’ Court. The District Attorney or County Attorney or designated legal counsel shall seek restitution for any property loss.

Upon completion of the audit investigation and all legal and personnel actions, records will be returned by the investigative offices to the appropriate department.

1B-15 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Hill County employees are expected to give their full and undivided attention to their job duties. They should not use Hill County facilities or equipment or their association with Hill County to carry on a private business or profession. Unless express approval is obtained in advance and in writing from their immediate supervisor, county employees should not engage in a profit-making business nor become involved with a non-profit organization outside of their employment with Hill County that interferes with the employee's assigned duties with Hill County.

C. COUNTY PROPERTY AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1C-1 COUNTY PROPERTY USAGE

Each County Employee shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, proper use, and upkeep of any County equipment assigned to him/her. County employees shall only use equipment, vehicles, supplies, tools, and other County property that they are authorized to use. Personal use of County equipment, vehicles, supplies, tools, **laptops, desktop pcs, notebooks/tablets**, and any other county property is not permitted and may result in discipline up to and including termination. **Non County devices, for example, laptops, thumb drives, phones, switches, routers, or other devices may not be connected to Hill County computer or network hardware. Devices related to material evidence or investigations are exempt as the material becomes the Custody of the County upon receipt. Phones, laptops, notebooks may be charged via wall, vehicle, or power strips. Hill County will follow policies provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety CJIS Security Policy.** Improper use may subject you to criminal prosecution.

Pursuant to Section 39.02 of the Penal Code:

ABUSE OF OFFICIAL CAPACITY. (a) A public servant commits an offense if, with intent to obtain a benefit or with intent to harm or defraud another, he intentionally or knowingly:

(1) violates a law relating to the public servant's office or employment; or

(2) misuses government property, services, personnel, or any other thing of value belonging to the government that has come into the public servant's custody or possession by virtue of the public servant's office or employment.

1C-2 COUNTY VEHICLE USAGE

Some employees may be required to use county vehicles as part of their job. Employees who are assigned county vehicles shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, proper use and upkeep of these vehicles. Employees may only use the vehicles they are authorized to use. Employees may not allow other individuals to operate the vehicles they have been assigned.

If personal use of a county vehicle is permitted, the employee will be required to keep a log of all personal miles driven, including to and from work. These personal miles will be subject to payroll taxes at the current IRS rate in accordance with IRS rules and regulations.

Employees who operate vehicles must maintain a current active license for operation of that vehicle. If they have any change in status of their license, they must immediately notify their supervisor. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle requiring a license for its legal operation shall be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination if that license is suspended or revoked.

An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for its legal

operation, but who is deemed uninsurable by the County's vehicle liability carrier, even though the employee's license has not been revoked or suspended, shall be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination.

Any employee involved in an accident while operating County equipment or vehicles shall immediately report the accident to his/her supervisor and to the proper law enforcement or other authority immediately. A copy of all accident and incident reports prepared by the employee shall be sent to their Supervisor and the County Loss Control Coordinator who is the County Auditor.

Personal names of elected officials will not be permitted on County vehicles without the approval of the Commissioners' Court.

All county vehicles will be stored at an assigned parking/storage location as determined by the Commissioners Court.

Authorized parking/storage locations:

- Road and Bridge Barn #1
- Road and Bridge Barn #2
- Road and Bridge Barn #3
- Road and Bridge Barn #4
- Sheriff's Office
- County Annex Building

Elected Officials may be assigned county vehicles but will be subject to this vehicle use policy unless exemption is authorized by Commissioners' Court.

With separate Commissioners' Court approval, Road and Bridge employees may be assigned vehicles designated as "response vehicles".

This policy will not be construed to inhibit or hinder Road and Bridge Departments from proper response to emergency situations or weather events.

1C-3 CELL PHONE USAGE

Hill County determines on a case by case basis the need for county provided cell phones. County cell phones are to be used for business purposes only. All persons assigned a cell phone are responsible for maintaining their voice mail box at all times.

Hill County strongly discourages the use of any cell phone while operating any vehicle. Employees shall plan calls to allow placement of calls either prior to traveling or while on rest breaks.

Hill County bans all employees from texting while operating any county owned vehicle. County employees who are driving their own personal vehicle are also banned from texting while driving on

county business. Federal law prohibits any CDL driver operating any vehicle over 10,000 GWR from texting with fines and penalties, up to including loss of CDL.

Employees in possession of a Hill County owned cellular phone are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent theft and vandalism.

All charges in excess of the normal monthly charge, including any plan charges authorized by the department head, are the responsibility of the cell phone user. All plan changes must be approved by the Auditor per written agreement.

Each department may set their own rules and regulations regarding personal cell phone usage while at work.

1C-4 INTERNET USAGE POLICY

I. Objectives

The function of the Hill County Internet Usage Policy is to provide a framework to protect and manage Internet connectivity as a resource and tool to transact Hill County Business. The Cisco IronPort provides the structure, audit trail, and management of web site activity and County bandwidth. The IronPort has the ability to generate reports that can empower Elected Officials and Department Heads to manage their respective offices. This policy addresses personal conduct of Hill County employees while utilizing a Hill County technology resource provided to conduct County business.

II. General

Statement of Policy

The purpose of this section is to address the standards of acceptable use of the County's Internet access resources. Internet access is provided to County employees for the purposes of County business. Resources required for internet access, including hardware and software, are the property of Hill County. The County reserves the right to monitor all Internet activity including web browsing, ftp, and other internet activities subject to State and Federal Law occurring on County-owned communication hardware. As the Internet is the super highway to world, it provides a wealth of topics and information that may be useful in business processing. At the same time, there is a wealth of information that provides no business value to county processing i.e. using the network for entertainment. In an effort to best utilize resources provided by Hill County and protect those resources, hardware and software has been installed that restricts access to sites that may not be appropriate to conduct business.

Standard of Conduct

Use of the technology provided by Hill County is a privilege, not a right, which may be extended to employees at the request of the Elected Official or Department

Head. Internet access may be utilized to perform activities necessary to conduct Hill County business. Transmission of or viewing any material in violation of federal or state regulation is strictly prohibited. Viewing or utilizing any County hardware for storage of pornography is strictly prohibited with the exception of criminal investigations. In addition, Internet access may not be used for commercial ventures or non-county sanctioned activities.

Employee Responsibility

Internet access is provided to employees to support Hill County business goals. Any fees assessed due to an employee's misuse or negligence on the Internet will be reimbursed back to Hill County. Users may not use the Internet in any way that would disrupt or degrade the Hill County network. If an employee inadvertently accesses an unauthorized site, he or she should notify their supervisor. A note will be added to the activity report to reflect that site activity was unintentional.

It is the user's responsibility, as outlined in the Criminal Justice Information Security (CJIS) requirements and the Hill County Computer Access Control Policy - System Activity, to lock the PC when left unattended. Locking the PC is a preventative measure that thwarts unauthorized users from accessing content under your identity. In addition, passwords should not be shared as noted by the Hill County Computer Access Policy and the CJIS Security Audit.

III. Internet Usage Restrictions

Web Access Policies

The IronPort device provides the ability to create web access policies that include the option to monitor, block, or allow sites. Currently there are three Policy Groups available on the IronPort. A fourth option, outside the IronPort device, is to exclude all Internet access. Exceptions to the restrictions list may be requested by the Elected Official or the Department Head and documented by the IT Department.

Level	Web Access Policy	Access	Definition/Blocked Categories
0	None	No Internet Accesses	No Internet Access
5	Video Network	Specific for 3 Addresses	Blocks All Outside Activity
4	Sites Allowed		Specific to Building Locations
3	Hill County Standard Users	Standard Internet Access	
2	Hill County Management	Enhance Internet Access.	Adult/Sexually Explicit
1	Unlimited (For Prosecution/Law Enforcement Investigation)	Unlimited	No Blocks -

As new functionality is required to conduct County business, it is recommended that additional Policy Groups be set up and existing Groups be modified as necessary to better align business needs.

Analysis & Reporting

IronPort has the ability to analyze and generate reports based on Internet activity. The Client Web Activity Report will be utilized to display the “Top Clients by Total Web Activity”, Top Clients by Transactions Blocked”, and the “Summary with Bandwidth Saved by Blocking”.

The “Website Activity Report” displays a list of websites blocked and the “Top Sites by High Risk Transactions”.

On a routine basis, reports will be generated and reviewed by Information Technology Department for unauthorized web activity which translates into blocked addresses. The County Judge and the IT Director will review unauthorized web activity on a weekly basis and determine what impact the activity may have on County operations.

On a monthly basis, a report will be generated by the IT Department analyzing addresses utilizing the greatest bandwidth and having the most web transactions blocked due to spam or suspicious activity. The Information Technology Department will provide each Elected Official/Department Head having PCs in the top twenty category with a report including the bandwidth utilized and web activity. Any unauthorized access to Adult/Sexually Explicit sites will be referred directly to the Hill

County Attorney's Office for review. Web Activity Reports will be provided to the Commissioners Court with the IT Technology Review or as requested.

IV. HR Management – Internet Activity

The Hill County Internet Usage Policy outlines the personal responsibility of each employee. The Hill County Information Technology Department is just the resource to gather information that may be detrimental to Hill County business processing. The reporting option empowers Elected Officials/Department Heads to handle disciplinary actions related to non-compliance of this policy. Unauthorized activity related to Adult/Sexually Explicit sites will be referred to the Hill County Attorney's Office.

Disciplinary actions should follow recommended guidelines outlined by the Hill County Personnel Policy Manual, but include discipline up to and including immediate termination.

1C-5 COMPUTER ACCESS CONTROL

The function of the Computer Access Control Policy is to provide a security structure that protects Hill County computer hardware, software, and data which may be sensitive or confidential. In addition, the policy provides the approval process to add, delete, or modify user access to the Hill County network and its applications. This policy sets security standards, maintains integrity of network access, and verifies the users' identity prior to access to the Hill County network. The Hill County Computer Access Control Policy will comply with and make adjustments as required to maintain compliance with the CJIS Security requirements. In addition, information technology best practices will be utilized to protect Hill County assets.

1.1 User Accounts – Creation, Deletion, Modification

Creation – Upon submission of the “Hill County User ID Request Form”, a unique user account will be created. The submission of the request form should be based on business necessity and job responsibilities. The account id will be associated with the employee or vendor throughout their employment and/or relationship to Hill County. The concept of least privilege will be utilized to add appropriate rights and role access.

Deletion – Upon termination of the user's employment and/or relationship, it is the responsibility of the Department Head or their designee to submit to the IT Department an updated Request Form with the delete option checked. This is a critical step in maintaining the integrity and security of data and IT Systems. All user accounts associated with an employee or vendor will be suspended on the date of termination of employment and/or relationship.

Modification – In the event an employee is transferred to another department or job responsibility within the same department, the Department Head or their designee shall submit an updated User Request Form with the modification. When a user is on a leave of absence and will not require access for an extended period of time, the Department Head or their designee should notify the IT Department to disable the account until the employee's return.

1.2 General Password Directives/Best Practices & CJIS Recommendations

Account passwords should not be shared.

Account passwords must not be written down or recorded in a readable format.

Passwords must not be hard coded in scripts or clear text files.

All vendor-supplied default passwords must be changed prior to use of the system for the County's business.

Passwords must have a minimum of eight (8) characters and must contain three (3) of the following four (4):

Lowercase alpha

Uppercase alpha

Numeric

Special Character

Passwords and user id shall not be the same.

Password changes must be automatically forced at least once every 90 days.

Passwords shall not be a dictionary word or proper name.

Initial passwords must be changed by the user prior to gaining access to the Hill County network.

The practice of reusing the same password when prompted for a change is prohibited. Systems must enable password history to maintain a password history for accounts. The history file must maintain at the least ten (10) passwords.

Passwords shall not be viewable or transmitted in the clear outside of the secure domain.

Passwords shall not be displayed when entered.

1.3 Privileged Access (root, super user or administrator)

Privileged access to systems will be granted to specific users whose job responsibilities require such access. Privileged access will be for a specific purpose and will expire when no longer needed for that purpose.

Accounts with privileged access must only be utilized to perform administrative tasks. A secondary account must be created and utilized for conducting non-privileged activities.

Generic accounts will not be used for privileged access. Users do not have permission to modify system configuration files unless specifically authorized. Users will not in any way compromise the security of the system. Hill County will follow the CJIS Security guidelines of Least Privilege.

Users will not use their privileged access to examine or modify the files of any other users of the system unless they are working on a legal/security investigation and have prior authorization. Non-County owned equipment will not be connected to the Hill County network.

1.4 Remote Access

Remote access accounts are limited to the business necessity for network maintenance and support. Vendors who meet CJIS Security requirements, along with CJIS approved connectivity methods, may be granted access for operational necessity. As any external connectivity into the network has a risk factor, the County Judge along with the IT Department will determine the business necessity for remote access.

Note: Many information assets are available via the Internet and DO NOT require VPN access into the network. This includes but is not limited to:

Hill County Email utilizing the Google for Government

Hill County Website: www.co.hill.tx.us

Vendors requiring remote access to the County's systems must be limited according to business necessity. Maintenance ports and modems must be disabled and only be active during the maintenance window. These solutions must be approved by the County Judge and IT Department.

1.5 System Inactivity

Users must not allow active sessions to remain unattended when using County systems and/or applications. Users must lock or log out accounts when left unattended. When possible, the systems must automatically lock the session or log out accounts after 15 minutes of inactivity. It is the responsibility of the employee at the end of the business day, to log out of all opened Hill County applications and log off of the PC or Workstation.

1.6 General Account Maintenance

On a routine basis access rights must be reviewed in order to maintain effective access control. Accounts that have not been accessed for 15 days or more will be disabled and reviewed by the IT Department for deletion. All accounts that are inactive for 45 days must be disabled and reviewed for deletion after 90 days.

1.7 System Authentication Failures

The County's systems must be configured to not provide information following unsuccessful authentication attempts. This includes identifying which portion of the logon sequence was invalid. After five consecutive authentication failures accounts must be automatically locked and automatically unlocked after a period of no less than 30 minutes or require administrative intervention to manually reset the accounts. Reactivation of the account must only be executed after verification of the Information User's identity.

1.8 System Banners

Effective 2013 (from CJIS), "Hill County will display a system use notification message (warning banner) providing appropriate privacy and security notices before granting access".

Legal notices denoting confidentiality and monitoring of such systems, upon review by the Hill County Attorney's Office, may be posted prior to gaining access to the Hill County network. A sample policy is provided below.

"This system is restricted to authorized users for legitimate business purposes. Unauthorized users are subject to disciplinary action, civil liability and criminal penalties. In accordance with published

security policies, individuals accessing this system consent to having all of their activities monitored and recorded. Any evidence of unauthorized activity may be provided to local, state, and federal law enforcement officials”.

1.9 Access Control Policy Deviation

Deviations to the Hill County Computer Access Control Policy must be approved by Hill County Commissioners’ Court.

This policy consists of recommendations from CJIS Security Models, as well as other Local Government Security Best Practices.

D. SAFETY AND HEALTH EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1D-1 WORKERS COMPENSATION

All Hill County employees are covered by workers' compensation coverage while on duty for the County. Workers' compensation coverage pays for medical bills resulting from a covered injury or illness an employee incurs while carrying out the duties of his/her job. Workers' compensation also pays Temporary Income Benefits (TIBS) for time lost from work in excess of seven calendar days as the result of eligible work related injuries or illnesses.

Employees are required to use PTO for all workers' compensation time off less than 8 days.

All employees who are placed on Worker's Compensation leave will fall under the Family Medical Leave Act. Hill County runs FMLA and Worker's Compensation concurrently.

Any employee who suffers a job related illness or injury is required to notify his/her supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor must notify the Treasurer as soon as possible and provide details sufficient for filing a first report to the Workers Compensation insurance carrier. Failure to promptly report job related injuries or illnesses may affect an employee's eligibility for benefits or delay benefit payments.

An employee who has lost time because of a work related accident or illness is required to provide a release from the attending physician before being allowed to return to work.

An employee's workers' compensation benefits may be adversely affected if the employee is injured while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or while the employee is engaging in horseplay.

An employee will not accrue PTO while on workers compensation leave.

1D-2 EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Hill County is committed to providing a safe workplace for our employees.

Each County employee must adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees as well as comply with their departmental safety requirements. Safety procedures may differ at each county department. Your supervisor will provide you with specific information pertaining to your position.

Failure to follow the safety standards set by the County or your supervisor subjects an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees seeing unsafe working conditions shall either take steps to correct those conditions or report the unsafe conditions to their supervisor.

1D-3 VIOLATIONS

Failure to follow the safety standards set by the county shall make an employee subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. An employee causing an accident resulting in major injury or death because of failure to follow safety standards may be terminated.

1D-4 DRUG AND ALCOHOL- ALL EMPLOYEES

Hill County is a drug and alcohol free workplace. A county employee may not be present at work during a period the employee's ability to perform his or her duties is impaired by drugs or alcohol. The County believes that a drug and alcohol-free workplace will help ensure a healthy, safe, and secure work environment.

This policy applies to all employees of Hill County regardless of rank or position and shall include full time, part time and temporary employees. The only exception to this policy is the possession of controlled substances by law enforcement personnel as part of their law enforcement duties.

An employee may not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, sell, purchase, or use a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia on County property or while conducting County business not on County property.

An employee may not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County.

An employee may not possess or use unauthorized prescription or over-the-counter drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County. An employee may not use prescription or over-the-counter drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County, in a manner other than that intended by the manufacturer or prescribed by a physician.

An employee may use prescription and over-the-counter drugs in standard dosage or according to a physician's prescription if the use will not impair the employee's ability to do his or her job safely

and effectively. An employee must keep prescription medications used at work in their original container.

An employee taking prescribed or over-the-counter medications is responsible for consulting the prescribing physician or a pharmacist to determine if the medication could interfere with the safe and effective performance of his or her job duties.

If the use of a medication could compromise an employee's ability to do his or her job or the safety of the employee, fellow employees or the public, the employee must report the condition to his or her supervisor at the start of the workday or used appropriate personnel procedures (e.g., call in sick, use leave, request change of duty, notify personal doctor).

A supervisor must treat any information related to an employee's authorized use of prescription medications and any other medical information provided by the employee as confidential information.

An employee having problems with drugs or alcohol is encouraged to seek treatment from a qualified professional. Information on benefits provided for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse problems provided by the County's health plan program is available in the employee's health plan booklet or from the Treasurer's Office.

Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination.

1D-5 DRUG AND ALCOHOL- CDL EMPLOYEES

CDL Drivers are an extremely valuable resource for Hill County's business. Their health and safety is a serious County concern. Drug or alcohol use may pose a serious threat to driver health and safety. It is, therefore, the policy of the County to prohibit CDL employees from being under the influence of or using illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours.

The Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA") has issued regulations, which require the County to implement a controlled substance testing program. The County will comply with these. All CDL drivers are advised that remaining drug-free and medically qualified to drive are conditions of continued employment with the County.

Specifically, it is the policy of Hill County that the use, sale, purchase, transfer, possession or presence in one's system of any controlled substance (except medically prescribed drugs) or alcohol by any CDL driver while on County premises, engaged in County business, while operating County equipment, or while under the authority of the County is strictly prohibited. Mandatory testing must apply to every person who operates a commercial motor vehicle in interstate or intrastate commerce and is subject to the CDL licensing requirement. Hill County will conduct pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion and post-accident drug testing in accordance with federal law.

1D-6 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Hill County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Hill County will not tolerate or condone violence of any kind in the workplace. The county will also not tolerate or condone any threats of violence, direct or indirect, this includes jokes. All threats will be taken seriously and will be investigated. Employees must refrain from any conduct or comments that might make another employee suspicious or in fear for their safety. Employees are required to report all suspicious conduct or comments to their immediate supervisor. Employees should be aware of their surroundings at all times and report any suspicious behavior from the public, former employees or current employees to their immediate supervisor or the sheriff's department. Pursuant to Penal Code 46.02, 46.03 and 46.51 No employee may possess a firearm or other weapon other than an authorized Peace Officer, Judicial Officials, or Attorneys for the State, with or without permits in all county offices and buildings owned or used by Hill County, this also includes county owned vehicles. By law permitted carries include Law Enforcement Officers, County Attorney, District Attorney, County Judge, District Judge, County Court at Law Judge, Justices of the Peace, Game Warden, Parole Officers and Probation Officers. If employees believe that a person is violating this policy, they should immediately report to their immediate supervisor or the sheriff's department. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination.

1D-7 SOCIAL MEDIA

For purposes of this policy "social media" includes, but is not limited to, online forums, blogs and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram, etc.

Hill County recognizes the importance of social media for its employees. However, use of social media by employees may become a problem if: it interferes with the employee's work; is used to harass supervisors, co-workers, customers or vendors; creates a hostile work environment; or harms the goodwill and reputation of Hill County among the community at large. Hill County encourages employees to use social media within the parameters of the following guidelines and in a way that does not produce the adverse consequences mentioned above.

Where no policy or guideline exists, employees are expected to use their best judgment and take the most prudent action possible. If you are uncertain about the appropriateness of a social media posting, check with your manager or supervisor.

- If your posts on social media mention Hill County make clear that you are an employee of Hill County and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of Hill County.
- Do not mention Hill County supervisors, employees, customers or vendors without their express consent.
- Do not pick fights. If you see a misrepresentation about Hill County, respond respectfully with factual information, not inflammatory comments.
- Remember, you are responsible for what you write or present on social media. You can be sued by other employees, supervisors, customers or vendors, and any individual that views

your social media posts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. Employees can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for what they post on social media platforms, even if the employee did not use a county computer or if the post did not occur during work hours or on county property.

- Employees may not use Hill County computer equipment for non-work related activities without written permission. Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work. Hill County monitors its computers to ensure compliance with this restriction.
- You must comply with copyright laws, and cite or reference sources accurately.
- Do not link to Hill County's website or post Hill County material on a social media site without written permission from your supervisor.
- All Hill County policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment and code of conduct.
- Any confidential information that you obtained through your position at Hill County must be kept confidential and should not be discussed through in social media forum.
- Violation of this policy may lead to discipline up to and including the immediate termination of employment.

It is the policy of Hill County that supervisors do not engage in social media activities with their employees.

SECTION 2: EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

A. EMPLOYEE PAYROLL

2A-1 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT SAFE HARBOR

Hill County makes every effort to pay its employees correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When mistakes do happen and are called to your supervisor's attention, Hill County will promptly make any corrections necessary. Please review your pay stub when you receive it to make sure it is correct. If you believe a mistake has occurred or if you have any questions, please use the reporting procedure outlined below. If you are overpaid the county will make the necessary corrections at the next payroll.

Employees who are classified as non-exempt employees must maintain an accurate record of the total hours you work each day. It is the responsibility of each employee to verify that their timesheets are correct. Your timesheet must accurately reflect all regular and overtime hours worked; any absences, late arrivals, early departures, and meal breaks. Do not sign your timesheet if it is not accurate. When you receive each pay check, please verify immediately that you were paid correctly for all regular and overtime hours worked each work week.

Non-exempt employees, unless authorized by your supervisor, should not work any hours that are not authorized. Do not start work early, finish work late, work during a meal break, or perform any other extra or overtime work unless you are authorized to do so. That time worked is to be recorded on your timesheet. Employees are prohibited from performing any "off-the-clock" work. "Off-the-clock" work means work you may perform but fail to report on your timesheet. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If anyone directs you to work without documenting your time worked, you must tell the Treasurer.

It is a violation of Hill County policy for any employee to falsify a timesheet, or to alter another employee's timesheet. It is also a serious violation of County policy for any employee, supervisor or official to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked, or to alter another employee's time card to under- or over-report hours worked. If anyone instructs you to (1) incorrectly or falsely under- or over-report your hours worked, or (2) alter another employee's time records to inaccurately or falsely report that employee's hours worked, you should report it immediately to the Treasurer's office, PO Box 671, Hillsboro TX 76645, 254-582-4050.

If you are classified as an exempt salaried employee, you will receive a salary which is intended to compensate you for all hours worked for the County. This salary will be established at the time of hire or when you become classified as an exempt employee. While it may be subject to review and modification from time to time, the salary will be a pre-determined amount that will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work you perform.

If you are classified as an exempt salaried employee, you will receive a salary which is intended to compensate you for all hours worked for the County. This salary will be established at the time of hire or when you become classified as an exempt employee. While it may be subject to review and

modification from time to time, the salary will be a pre-determined amount that will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work you perform.

For exempt employees, your salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as your portion of health, dental or life premiums; state, federal or local taxes, social security, retirement; or, voluntary contributions to a deferred compensation plan. In any workweek in which you performed any work, your wages may be reduced for any of the following reasons: 1) absence from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability; or 2) full day disciplinary suspensions for infractions of our written policies and procedures; or 3) full day for violating safety rules of a major significance; or 4) Family and Medical Leave or Military Leave absences; or 5) to offset amounts received as payment for jury and witness fees or military pay; or 6) the first or last week of employment in the event you work less than a full week.

If you are an exempt employee, in any workweek in which you performed any work, your salary will not be reduced for any of the following reasons: 1) partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness or disability; or 2) your absence because the facility is closed on a scheduled work day; or 3) your absence because of the County's operating requirements; or 4) absences for jury duty, attendance as a witness, or military leave in any week in which you have performed any work; or 5) any other deductions prohibited by state or federal law.

Please note: it is not an improper deduction to reduce an employee's accrued vacation, personal or other forms of paid time off for full or partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness or disability.

If you have questions about deductions from your pay, please immediately contact your supervisor. If you believe you have been subject to any improper deductions or your pay does not accurately reflect your hours worked, you should immediately report the matter to the Treasurer's office, PO Box 671, Hillsboro TX 76645, 254-582-4050. If you are unsure of who to contact or if you have not received a satisfactory response within five business days after reporting the incident, please immediately contact the County Attorney, David Holmes, PO Box 252, Hillsboro TX 76645, 254-582-4047. Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including discharge for any employee(s) who violates this policy. In addition, the County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the County's investigation of such reports. Retaliation is unacceptable, and any form of retaliation in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2A-2 Internal Revenue Service (IRS) FRINGE BENEFITS

Hill County will comply with the IRS with regard to fringe benefits such as county uniforms, county vehicle usage and day-trip meals. You may be responsible for paying payroll taxes on such fringe benefits.

Uniforms expenses for Hill County purposes are defined as shirts, pants, badges, patches, ball caps, toboggans and jackets which are clearly identified with the name of Hill County and related department. It does not include shoes, boots, or cowboy hats. In order to purchase uniforms, there

must be a uniform line in the departmental budget. Budget amendments requested in advance are required to exceed the department's uniform budget.

2A-3 COMPENSATION

Hill County Commissioners Court annually sets the maximum compensation for each employee in accordance with Texas State Law.

Hill County complies with the Fair Labor Standards Acts as outlined in the Fair Labor Standards Safe Harbor policy.

Law Enforcement personnel are treated in accordance with the 207(k) exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Commissioners Court has adopted this exemption.

All non-exempt County employees shall be paid an hourly wage.

Some employees may have the classification of hourly employees paid on a salary basis, but they remain non-exempt for FLSA purposes. For full time non-exempt employees, the monthly salary compensates the employee for all hours worked up to 40 in each workweek of the month.

Part time employees will be paid an hourly wage designated by the county for the amount of hours worked.

Temporary employees shall be paid hourly at least the minimum wage established by the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended.

In the event of a major disaster where the County Judge has issued a disaster declaration and it has been extended by the Commissioners' Court, in order for the County to be reimbursed by FEMA, all salaried employees will be calculated in the same manner as hourly employees for the duration of the disaster incident and the disaster declaration is rescinded or allowed to expire.

2A-4 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck for federal withholding, social security, Medicare, and any other deductions required by law.

Employees eligible for membership in the Texas County and District Retirement System shall have their contributions to that system deducted from each paycheck. Any optional deduction authorized by the Commissioners' Court and approved by the employee shall also be made from the employee's paycheck.

No optional deduction shall be made from an employee's paycheck unless the employee turns in written authorization for the deduction to the County Treasurer's Office.

2A-5 WORK WEEKS AND WORK PERIODS

For purposes of recordkeeping and to determine overtime in compliance with the Fair Labor

Standards Act (FLSA), the workweek for Hill County shall begin at 12:01 a.m. on each Saturday and end seven (7) consecutive days later (168 hours). Law Enforcement employees who fall under the FLSA 207(k) exemption shall have a work period of 14 days and 86 hours as established by the Hill County Commissioners Court.

2A-6 TIMESHEETS

Each employee must fill out a time sheet to be turned in to their supervisor on the last day of each pay period. Failure to complete a timesheet may result in an employee only receiving minimum wage payment until the proper time sheet has been completed and turned into the payroll department. All corrections will be made on the next regularly scheduled payroll. The time sheet prepared by the employee shall show an accurate record of all time worked and leave taken, whether paid or unpaid, for the pay period.

Regular employees must account for up to 40 hours each week and law enforcement employee must account for up to 80 hours each work period. The Treasurer's Office will adjust PTO Time as required to get to the appropriate hours. If an employee does not have enough PTO available, their pay will be docked accordingly. This does exclude Dispatch, see policy on Dispatch below:

Dispatchers work rotating 12 hour shifts which makes one week per pay period total 36 hours as opposed to 40 hours. Since the other week in the pay period totals 48 hours, Dispatchers will not be required to use 4 hours of PTO in their short week to bring them to the 40 hour total. This exception is only permitted when the hour shortage is due to the rotating 12 hour schedule, PTO usage is required to meet the 40 hour per week requirement. This exception is only permitted when there is a 4-hour shortage due to the rotating 12 hour schedule, any other deficiency in hours will require the use of PTO to meet the 40 hours per week requirement.

Time sheets are governmental documents and as such require accurate and truthful information. Falsifying a time sheet, a governmental record is a criminal offense. Employees shall only use appropriate available leave to account for their regular weekly work schedule.

2A-7 PAY PERIODS

The pay period for Hill County shall be a bi-weekly pay period with the pay period dates established by the Commissioners' Court. If a payday falls on a holiday or a weekend, paychecks shall be issued on the last workday immediately preceding the holiday or weekend.

2A-8 WORK SCHEDULES

The normal hours of work for most County employees are generally from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Each department head shall determine the exact working schedules for their employees. In order to meet the needs of the County, certain departments or employees may be required to work a schedule that varies from the normal work schedule, or they may be subject to call back in case of emergency or special need.

2A-9 HOURS WORKED

Hours worked shall include all time actually spent in the service of the County as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and its regulations. The workday for the County shall begin at 12:01 a.m. each day and end 24 consecutive hours later.

2A-10 LAW ENFORCEMENT PAY AND OVERTIME

Hill County Commissioners Court has adopted the 207(k) exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act for law enforcement employees, which includes deputies and jailers. These employees have a work period of 14 days and overtime will be due after 86 hours actually worked. Law enforcement employees will be given straight time between 80 and 86 hours. Paid leave shall not be counted in determining if overtime has been worked in any workweek. Except in emergency situations, an employee shall be required to have authorization from their supervisor before working overtime. Overtime compensation shall be paid in the form “cash” payment on your next paycheck in accordance with the provisions of the FLSA under 207k.

2A-11 OVERTIME CALCULATIONS AND RULES

Overtime shall include all time actually worked for the county in excess of 40 hours in any workweek, with the exception of law enforcement (See policy on “Law Enforcement Pay and Overtime.”)

Paid leave shall not be counted in determining if overtime has been worked in any workweek. Except in emergency situations, an employee shall be required to have authorization from their supervisor before working overtime.

Overtime compensation shall be paid in the form “cash” payment on your next paycheck in accordance with the provisions of the FLSA. Covered employees shall receive paid overtime at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the amount of overtime worked.

2A-12 LONGEVITY

1. Hill County (HC) awards lump-sum longevity pay to eligible employees as a means of encouraging continued commitment to the County. To be eligible, employees must have worked full-time for the County for three (3) uninterrupted years or more.
2. Part-time employees who have worked 1000 hours or more for three (3) uninterrupted years or more will receive 50% of qualified pay amount. If a part-time employee becomes full-time, their part-time date shall be used for longevity purposes.
3. Longevity pay will be calculated based on the number of complete years of continuous service. A break in service resets the longevity calculation to zero.

4. Longevity pay amounts will be calculated for each eligible employee on September 30th of each year. Checks will be processed prior to the end of the calendar year. Employees must be employed by HC at the time longevity checks are actually issued.

5. Employees serving in grant positions will be provided longevity pay as outlined in this policy, provided there is no break in service. A break in service in a grant position resets the longevity calculation to zero.

6. Employees deployed on extended active military duty will not receive a longevity check for that year if check is issued during their deployment. Upon reinstatement with HC, however, the months served on extended active duty will be credited to longevity calculations and they will be eligible for longevity pay.

LONGEVITY PAY CHART

Rate Calculated Based on Time of Service as of September 30 each year.

<u>YEARS OF SERVICE</u>	<u>AMOUNT PER EACH FULL YEAR OF SERVICE</u>
3 – 7	\$75.00
8-12	\$100.00
13-20	\$125.00
20+	\$2,500.00 (Capped)

2A-13 DEMOTIONS

Demotions are the movement of an employee from one position to another with a decreased responsibility or complexity of job duties or to a lower salary. Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may choose to demote or re-assign any employees who are unable to meet performance requirements, for disciplinary reasons or for any other reason as deemed necessary by the official. Upon demotion, an employee’s salary may be adjusted downward. All demotions must follow the adopted policy on 2.27.24.

2A-14 TRANSFERS

Transfers are the lateral movement of an employee from one position to another with the same responsibility or complexity of job duties with no change in salary.

Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may transfer an employee in their department to a vacant position. All transfers must be handled in accordance with the budget adopted by Commissioners Court. All transfers must follow the adopted policy on 2.27.24.

2A-15 PROMOTIONS

Promotions are the movement of an employee from one position to another with an increased responsibility or complexity of job duties, and to a higher salary.

Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may promote an employee in their department to a vacant position. All promotions must be handled in accordance with the budget adopted by Commissioners Court. All promotions must follow the adopted policy on 2.27.24.

2A-16 SEPARATIONS

A separation shall be defined as any situation in which the employer-employee relationship between the County and a County employee ends. All separations from Hill County shall be designated as one of the following types: 1) resignation; 2) retirement; 3) dismissal; 4) reduction in force; or 5) death.

A resignation shall be classified as any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves his/her employment with Hill County and the separation does not fall into one of the other categories. Employees who are resigning should submit a written notice of resignation to his/her supervisor.

A retirement shall be any situation in which an employee meets the requirements to collect benefits under the County's retirement program and voluntarily elects to leave employment with the County to do so. An employee who is retiring should notify his/her supervisor of that intent at least 30 days prior to the actual retirement date to help prevent delays in starting the payment of retirement benefits.

A dismissal shall be any involuntary separation of employment that does not fall into one of the other categories of separation. Hill County is an "at will" employer and a supervisor may dismiss an employee at any time for any legal reason or no reason, with or without notice. An employee shall be separated from employment because of a reduction in force when his/her position is abolished or when there is a lack of funds to support the position or there is a lack of work to justify the position.

A separation by death shall occur when an individual dies while currently employed by the County. If an employee dies while still employed by the County, their designated beneficiary or estate shall receive all earned pay and payable benefits.

Employees who are rehired consistent with this policy will be considered a new hire in all regards including PTO accrual, hire date, and longevity pay.

2A-17 RETIREE REHIRES

Retired employees shall be eligible to apply for open positions with Hill County as long as the following provisions are met: 1) The retiree has been retired for at least 6 calendar months, 2) No prior arrangement or agreement was made between Hill County and the retiree for re-employment, and 3) strict adherence to normal leaving employment procedures were followed at the time of the employee's retirement.

The retiree must have a bona fide separation of employment and have been retired for a minimum of 6 calendar months. A bona fide separation means there is no prior agreement or understanding between Hill County and the retiree that the retiree would be rehired after retirement. According to

Rule 107.4 adopted by the TCDRS Board of Trustees, restrictions apply to elected officials, people employed for the same or different position in the same or different department, employee status changes, and independent contractors.

Newly elected officials who have recently retired from the county cannot draw their retirement because they have an arrangement to return to work for the county. Employees also cannot retire with an agreement to go work in a different department or different position. Changing employee status does not matter when determining if someone is still working for the county. Also, an employee cannot retire from the county with an arrangement to begin work as an independent contractor either.

Rehired retirees who did not have a bona fide separation of employment may owe a 10 percent excise tax and be required to repay all of their monthly retirement payments. Abusing the retirement provisions in such a manner would violate a qualification requirement for retirement plans under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, potentially resulting in significant tax consequences for the employer, its participating members and those retired employees.

Any retiree who meets all other TCDRS requirements, who is rehired consistent with this policy, must establish a new membership with TCDRS and will be considered to be a new member for the purposes of beneficiary determination and benefit selections.

B. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

2B-1 HEALTH AND DENTAL PLANS

Eligibility

All full time regular employees of Hill County shall be eligible for the group medical plan and dental plan benefits. Regular variable hour employees who work an average of thirty (30) or more hours a week in the measurement period will be eligible for health insurance after the measurement period. Regular part time, temporary seasonal, temporary short term part time, and regular variable hour employees who work an average of less than thirty (30) hours a week in the measurement period will not be eligible for health insurance.

Dependent Coverage

Eligible employees may cover their qualified dependents by paying the employee's portion of the dependent coverage as determined by the Commissioners' Court. Deductions for dependent coverage shall be made through payroll deduction from the employee's paycheck each pay period.

Details of coverage under the group medical insurance plan and dental plan are available in the County Treasurer's Office and may be obtained during the normal working hours for that office.

Employees who leave the employment of Hill County or who lose their coverage eligibility, may be eligible for an extension of the medical plan for themselves and their eligible dependents under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). If an employee is unable to return to work following FMLA leave, if eligible, they will be offered COBRA. Information on extension of

benefits under COBRA is available in the County Treasurer’s Office and may be obtained during the normal working hours for that office. COBRA notifications will be provided to all employees within 30 days of their hire date. All eligible employees and qualified dependents will be provided with COBRA information following their termination.

2B-2,3,4 OTHER PLANS – LIFE, SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCES

Hill County may provide a limited amount of life insurance on eligible employees as part of the group medical plan coverage. Hill County provides supplemental insurance coverage under an outside broker. All supplemental insurance coverage premiums are the responsibility of the employee. Information regarding these supplemental insurances may be obtained from the County Treasurer’s Office and/or during Open Enrollment.

2B-5 457(b) DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLANS

Hill County makes available 457(b) deferred compensation plans. All 457(b) deferred compensation plan premiums are the responsibility of the employee. Information regarding these 457(b) deferred compensation plans may be obtained from the Treasurer’s Office and/or during Open Enrollment.

2B-6 PAID TIME OFF (PTO)

Paid time off is used for vacation, sick time, bereavement leave, or any other absence from work.

Eligibility & Accrual

Only full-time regular employees shall be eligible for Paid Time Off (PTO) benefits.

1. Part-time and temporary employees shall not be eligible for PTO benefits.
2. Regular full-time employees are eligible for PTO accrual from the first day of employment.
3. Accrued PTO is available for usage after the first **full** pay period.

Years Worked

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Start Date – 5 years	6.81 hours per pay period until 176 hours are accrued per year
6 – 10 years	7.38 hours per pay period until 192 hours are accrued per year
11 +	8.31 hours per pay period until 216 hours are accrued per year

In most cases, employees will receive 26 accruals during the year at the rate listed above.

4. PTO shall not accrue while an employee is on leave without pay (FMLA, disciplinary action). PTO shall not accrue while an employee is out on worker’s compensation leave.
5. If an employee terminates employment before working three full years, the employee will not be paid for any accrued PTO.
6. Employees will not accrue PTO during their final pay period.

Maximum Number of Hours

7. The maximum number of PTO hours an employee may accrue are as follows:

Hired on or before 9/30/2012 480 hours

Hired on or after 10/1/2012 240 hours

8. Employees who reach their maximum accrual of PTO hours will no longer accrue time. Department heads and/or elected officials should encourage employees to take time off during the year. All paid time off (PTO) shall be subject to approval of the department head/elected official. PTO is a liability to the County and department heads/elected officials should strive to manage employee time off in order to comply with annual budgetary restraints.

Scheduling

9. Scheduling of PTO will be with the approval of the employee's department head or elected official.

Minimum Usage

10. The amount of PTO that may be taken at one time shall be in fifteen minute increments.

Borrowing

11. Employees shall only be able to use PTO which has already been accrued and shall not be allowed to borrow PTO against possible future accruals.
12. Employees shall not be allowed to receive pay in lieu of taking time off.

Holiday During Paid Time Off (PTO)

13. If a holiday falls during an employee's PTO, the holiday shall be charged in accordance with the POLICY ON HOLIDAYS and shall not be charged against the employee's PTO balance.

Payment At Termination

14. If an employee has worked for a full three years in a position which accrues PTO at the time the employee's employment with Hill County is terminated, the employee shall receive pay for all unused PTO up to the maximum allowed under this policy.
15. An employee who has not worked for a minimum of three full years in a position which accrues PTO shall not be eligible for any PTO pay upon termination of employment.

Record Keeping

16. ALL EMPLOYEES must accurately record all PTO time used on his/her time sheet.

2B-7 HOLIDAYS

Hill County Commissioners Court is responsible for setting the Holiday Schedule each year. The number of paid holidays may vary each year. Special rules may apply to Law Enforcement employees.

All full time regular employees shall be eligible for the paid holiday benefit at straight time, 8 hours per holiday.

When a holiday falls on an employee's day scheduled to work, they will be paid for 8 hours holiday pay or accrue at straight time.

If a paid holiday occurs during the PTO Time off of an eligible employee, that day shall be paid as a holiday and not be charged against the employee's PTO Time. An employee shall not be allowed to take a day off with pay prior to a holiday in anticipation of working on the holiday.

An eligible employee called in to work on a holiday because of an emergency, or other special need of the County, shall be given paid time off equivalent to the amount of time worked on the holiday.

2B-8 SICK LEAVE POOL

Purpose

The purpose of the Hill County Sick Leave Pool Policy is to provide additional paid time off to county employees in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury, surgery, or disability that prevents an employee from active employment. Days may be applied from the Pool only after the employee has exhausted all Paid Time Off (PTO) hours.

Definitions

A catastrophic illness or injury is defined as: *A terminal, life-threatening, and/or severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee that requires the services of a licensed health practitioner for a prolonged period of time and that forces the employee to exhaust all accrued leave time and to lose compensation from the County.

A licensed practitioner is: *A practitioner, as defined by the Texas Insurance code, who practices within the scope of his/her license.

Criteria Used to Determine Catastrophic Illness/Injury

The criteria used by the Committee to determine whether an illness or injury is a qualified catastrophic illness or injury as defined above will be:

1. A condition so severe that it results in the employee being unable to work for at least 20 continuous days;

2. A condition characterized by the sudden onset of symptoms which can be life threatening;
3. A condition which requires on-going medical treatment and has a defined end.

Conditions of a chronic illness, which may require long-term medical treatment or a lifestyle change as a part of the treatment, and are not in and of themselves considered catastrophic. Such conditions are not usually covered unless accompanied by a catastrophic condition or a complication that leads to a catastrophic condition. Some examples of Catastrophic Illness/Injury include but are not limited to:

Major non-elective Surgery	Severe Stroke or Heart Attack
Severe Brain or Internal Injuries	Organ Transplant
Loss of Limb	Terminal or Debilitating Cancer
Coma	Severe Burns
Liver or Kidney Failure	

Administration of the Pool

1. At the direction of the Commissioners Court, the County Treasurer shall serve as the Pool Administrator. The Pool Administrator shall be responsible for developing mechanisms to transfer accrued annual leave into and out of the Pool; developing rules and procedures for the operation of the Pool; and developing forms for contributing leave to, or using leave from, the Pool.
2. The Pool Administrative committee shall be composed of the following members appointed by the Commissioners Court: an elected official, the County Auditor or a staff member, the County Treasurer or a staff member, a County Commissioner or a staff member, and a non-supervisory employee. This committee shall be responsible for approving all valid applications for use of the leave from the Pool.
3. Vacancies that arise during the year shall be filled by appointment of the, Commissioners' Court. The appointment shall be made from the group represented by the vacating member.

Pool Membership

1. All regular-full-time employees are eligible to join the Leave pool by contributing a minimum of one day (8 hours) or a maximum of five days (40 hours) of pro per County fiscal year. Each day contributed will equal 8 hours.
2. New employees may join the pool after 6 months of continuous employment. Days donated will be subtracted from their PTO balance.
3. After the Pool is established, employees will only be able to join October 1st of each year. In the case of new employees, they are eligible to join for a thirty day period starting on their 6 month anniversary.
4. Membership enrollment forms must be submitted to the County Treasurers' Office. Days donated will be subtracted from each member's PTO.
5. Days donated become the property of the Hill County Leave Pool and will not be returned.

6. To maintain the Sick Leave Pool, all members must donate a minimum of 1 day or a maximum of 5 days of annual leave each October 1st. The Sick Leave Pool Committee may open enrollment during the course of the fiscal year to current members who wish to donate additional time. Members must join in October of each year to be eligible to donate additional time during the course of the fiscal year. Only one donation during the fiscal year is required to maintain membership in the pool.

Days Granted

1. Days will be granted only for catastrophic illness or surgery or other disability, which necessitates an absence from work for five consecutive days or longer. In case of chemotherapy for cancer treatment, days can be granted for 1-4 days absence for each treatment.
2. Pregnancy will not be covered by the Annual Leave pool, but complications due to pregnancy will be considered by the committee on a case by case basis.
3. The Leave Pool is only for a catastrophic illness/injury or surgery for the Pool member.
4. The maximum number of days granted to an employee each year shall not exceed one-third of the total amount of time in the pool at the time of the request or 45 days, whichever is less.
5. Employees who use pool leave are not required to pay back pool leave.
6. Employees who are using pool leave continue to receive all employee benefits.
7. Days will not be granted when an employee is receiving Workers, Compensation or long-term disability benefits.

Procedure

In order to avoid loss of pay, requests should reach the Pool Administrator at least 10 working days prior to the exhaustion of the employee's total accrual leave balances, except in emergency situations. Under no circumstances will awards be made retroactive.

1. An eligible employee must apply to the Pool Administrator in writing for permission to use time from the Pool. A completed application and an "Authority to Release and Certification of Medical Information form must be presented.
2. The Pool Administrator shall be responsible for receiving all applications for use of leave from the pool. The Pool Administrator will only present information to the committee on eligible employees. The Pool Administrator will not reveal the name of the employee to the Committee, only the information needed to determine if the condition is eligible for the leave.
3. If the Committee determines the employee is eligible for leave, the Pool Administrator shall approve the transfer of time from the Pool to the employee. The time shall be credited to the employee and shall be used in the same manner as PTO.
4. An employee absent on leave assigned from the Pool is treated for as if the employee were absent on PTO.

5. If a member is critically ill and unable to file an application for leave from the Pool, his/her department head or family member may submit an application.
6. Requests for leave pool shall be confidentially and individually reviewed by the committee in a called meeting. A member may be requested to appear before the committee to substantiate a request. HIPPA guidelines will be followed with the "need to know" procedure.
7. The decision of the committee shall be based on a majority vote of the Quorum. A Quorum shall be based on at least four committee representatives.

Final Authority

The Leave Pool Administrative Committee shall have the final approval/disapproval of employee applications.

Application Forms

All sick leave pool requests must be submitted to the Pool Administrator in writing.

Applications for donation of accrued leave time to the Hill County Leave Pool are available in the Treasurers' Office and on the County website.

Applications for withdrawal from the Hill County Leave Pool are available in the Treasurers' Office and on the County website. Applications for withdrawal must include the following information:

1. The amount of sick leave being requested from the sick leave pool;
2. The date that all accrued entitlement will be expended by the employee
3. The employment status of the employee, and
4. The employee's description of the catastrophic illness or injury

2B-9 JURY DUTY

All employees of Hill County who are called for jury duty shall receive their regular pay for the period they are called for jury duty, which includes both the jury selection process and, if selected, the time they actually serve on the jury. PTO Hours will not be used for pay.

Pay for serving on a jury shall only include the time the employee would have normally been scheduled to work and will not include extra pay if jury service involves time outside the employee's normal work schedule. Any fees paid for jury service may be kept by the employee.

All employees who are subpoenaed or ordered to attend court to appear as a witness or to testify in some official capacity on behalf of the County shall be entitled to leave with pay for such period as his/her court attendance may require. If an employee is absent from work to appear in private litigation in which he/she is a principal party, the time shall be charged to PTO or leave without pay.

Jury Duty will be paid at 8 hours straight time.

2B-10 MILITARY LEAVE

All Hill County employees who are members of the National Guard or active reserve components of the United States Armed Forces shall be allowed up to fifteen (15) days off per federal fiscal year with pay to attend authorized training sessions and exercises. The fifteen (15) day paid military leave shall apply to the Federal Fiscal year and any unused balance at the end of the year shall not be carried forward into the next Federal Fiscal year. Pay for attendance at Reserve or National Guard training sessions or exercises shall be authorized only for periods which fall within the employee's normal work schedule.

An employee may use annual leave, or leave without pay if he/she must attend Reserve or National Guard Training sessions or exercises in excess of the fifteen day maximum.

Hill County will provide upon request of the employee a statement that contains the number of workdays used for military leave in the fiscal year as well as a statement of the number of workdays left for use during the fiscal year.

An employee going on military leave shall provide his or her supervisor with a set of orders within two (2) business days after receiving them.

Hill County employees who leave their positions as a result of being called to active military service or who voluntarily enter the Armed Forces of the United States shall be eligible for re-employment in accordance with state and federal laws in effect at the time of their release from duty.

Health and dental benefits will end the last day of the month in which the employee works.

2B-11 RETIREMENT

All regular employees (full time, part time, and regular variable hour) shall be eligible for the retirement benefit offered through the Texas County and District Retirement System. Temporary seasonal and temporary short term part time employees will not be eligible for retirement benefits. Eligible employees shall make contributions to the retirement program through a system of payroll deduction. Hill County shall make a contribution to each eligible employee's retirement account according to requirements of TCDRS. Information on the retirement program may be obtained at the County Treasurer's Office during the normal working hours for that office, or at the TCDRS official website (TCDRS.org).

2B-12 SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE

All County employees shall participate in the Federal Social Security/Medicare program which provides certain retirement, disability, and other benefits. Deductions for these programs will be taken from each paycheck.

2B-13 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT/MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE (FMLA/MFL)

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) requires an employer to provide eligible employees with unpaid leave under certain circumstances. There are two types of leave available:

- 1) the basic 12-week FMLA entitlement; and
- 2) the Military Family Leave (MFL) entitlement described in this policy.

ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible for benefits under this policy, an employee must:

- 1) have worked for Hill County at least 12 months (it is not required that these 12 months be consecutive; however, a continuous break in service of 7 years or more will not be counted toward the 12 months); **and**
- 2) have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months; **and**
- 3) are employed at a work site that has 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius.

Any employees with any questions about their eligibility for FMLA leave should contact the Treasurer's office for more information.

QUALIFYING EVENTS:

Family medical leave under this policy may be taken for the following reasons:

- 1) the birth of a child and to care for that child;
- 2) the placement of a child in the employee's home for adoption or foster care;
- 3) to care for a spouse, child (under the age of 18 or if over 18 incapable of self-care due to a disability), or parent with a serious health condition;
- 4) the serious health condition of the employee that make the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job;

- 5) a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, child or parent is a covered military member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard), deployed to a foreign country or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in a foreign country;
- 6) to care for a covered service member (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin (nearest blood relative) of the service member; or
- 7) to care for a covered veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran began that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy.

SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION:

Serious health condition is defined as a health condition that requires overnight inpatient care at a hospital, hospice, or residential care medical facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

A serious health condition involving continuing treatment by a health care provider includes any one or more of the following:

- 1) a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition, that also involves:
 - a) Treatment two or more times within 30 days of incapacity; or
 - b) Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion within the first seven days of incapacity that results in a regimen of continuing treatment by a health care provider.
- 2) Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or pre-natal care.
- 3) Any period of incapacity or treatment due to a chronic serious health condition that requires periodic visits to a health care provider and continues over an extended period of time.
- 4) Any period of incapacity that is permanent or long term due to a condition for which treatment is not effective.
- 5) Any period of incapacity or absence to receive multiple treatments by a health care provider.

QUALIFYING EXIGENCY LEAVE:

An eligible employee may be entitled to use up to 12 weeks of their FMLA leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Leave may be used if the employee's spouse, child of any age or parent in the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserves or National Guard) is on active duty or called to active duty status in a foreign country.

Qualifying exigencies may include:

- 1) short-notice deployment (up to seven days of leave);
- 2) attending certain military events and related activities;
- 3) arranging for alternative childcare;
- 4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements;
- 5) periods of rest and recuperation for the covered military member (up to fifteen days of leave);
- 6) attending certain counseling sessions;

- 7) attending post-deployment activities (available for up to 90 days after the termination of the covered military member's active duty status);
- 8) other activities arising out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty in a foreign country and agreed upon by the county and the employee;
- 9) attending family support or assistance programs and informational briefings;
- 10) acting as the covered military member's representative before a governmental agency;
- 11) addressing issues that arise from the death of a covered military member while on active duty status in a foreign country; and
- 12) other activities arising out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty in a foreign country and agreed upon by the county and employee.

LENGTH OF LEAVE:

An employee may use up to 12 weeks leave per 12-month period under this policy. Hill County sets the 12-month period used under this policy as a "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses FMLA leave.

A married couple who both work for the county is entitled to a maximum combined leave of 12 weeks in any 12-month period for the birth or placement of a child, or care for a parent with a serious health condition. The combined limit for a married couple employed by the county is 26 weeks in a single 12-month period if leave is to care for a covered service member or veteran with a serious injury or illness.

MILITARY CAREGIVER LEAVE:

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is either a current member or veteran of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard).

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) who has been rendered medically unfit to perform their duties due to a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a veteran (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) at any time during the period of five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy.

The MFL entitlement is applied on a per-injury basis and an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 weeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered service members or covered veteran with a subsequent serious illness or injury, except that no more than 26 weeks may be taken within any single 12-month period.

An eligible employee may begin taking military caregiver leave up to five years after their family member was discharged or released from the military. The eligible employee's first date of leave

must be within the five-year period; however, the employee may continue to take such leave throughout the single 12-month period that is applicable to military caregiver leave, even if the leave extends beyond the five-year period.

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the county's operations.

WORK RELATED INJURY:

Hill County will always designate qualifying work related injuries with lost time as FMLA qualifying.

SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE:

Hill County requires substitution of paid leave for all FMLA or MFL events. An employee must follow the vacation and sick leave policy guidelines. The balance of FMLA is unpaid leave. FMLA and MFL run concurrently with all substituted paid leave, including Workers' Compensation leave.

The maximum amount of paid and unpaid leave that may be used under this policy in a 12-month period is 12 weeks, except for qualifying leave to care for a covered military member with a serious injury or illness which is a maximum of 26-weeks in a 12-month period.

CONTINUED EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

While an employee is on leave under this policy, the county will continue to pay the employee's medical plan premium at the same rate as if the employee had been actively at work. The employee is required to pay for dependent coverage and for any other coverage for which the employee would normally pay, or the coverage will be discontinued. An employee's obligation to pay for coverage will be made through regular payroll deduction while the employee is on paid leave status. While on unpaid leave, the employee is required to pay for premiums due to the county no later than 30 days after the date of the pay period in which the premium comes due. The county may cancel unpaid coverage by providing the employee advance written notice, not less than 15 days before the coverage will be cancelled for non-payment.

At the end of the 12-week leave period or the 26-week leave period in a single 12-month period to care for an injured covered military member, an eligible employee will be offered COBRA if they are unable to return to work."==

INTERMITTENT LEAVE AND REDUCED SCHEDULE:

An employee may take intermittent leave under this policy if it is necessary for the care and treatment of a serious health condition of the employee, the employee's eligible family member or the care of a covered military member or veteran.

An employee may work a reduced schedule under this policy if it is necessary for the care and treatment of a serious health condition of the employee, the employee's eligible family member, or the care of a covered military member or veteran.

All work time missed as the result of intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule under this policy will be deducted from the employee's 12-week or 26-week leave eligibility in a single 12-month period.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

The county has the right to ask for certification of the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's eligible family member when the employee requests or is using leave under this policy.

The county may send a request for medical certification to an employee who has been out of work for three or more days to determine the employee's FMLA eligibility. The employee is requested to have their physician complete and return the medical certification, or provide appropriate documentation, within 15 days of the employee's receipt of the form to be eligible for FMLA. An employee's failure to return the medical certification may result in denial of FMLA by the county.

The employee must respond to the county's request for certification within 15 days of receipt of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay in writing before the 15th day after receipt of the request. If an employee does not provide certification or otherwise respond, the county may deny leave under this policy.

If an employee requests intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule, the certification submitted must also include the dates and duration of treatment and a statement of medical necessity for taking intermittent leave or working a reduced schedule. The county may request re-certification for intermittent or reduced schedule leave every six months in connection with an eligible absence.

The county may ask for a second opinion from a health care provider of the county's choice, at the expense of the county, if the county has reason to question the certification, unless the leave is necessary to care for a seriously injured or ill covered service member supported by an invitational travel order (ITO) or invitational travel authorization (ITA) to join an injured or ill service member at their bedside.

If there is a conflict between the certification submitted by the employee and the second certification obtained by the county, the county may require a third certification, at the expense of the county, from a health care provider agreed upon by both the employee and the county. The third opinion is final and binding on the county and the employee.

REQUESTING LEAVE:

Unless FMLA leave is unforeseeable, an employee is required to submit a written request for leave under this policy to their immediate supervisor.

Where reasonably practicable, an employee should give their immediate supervisor a minimum of 30-days' notice before beginning leave under this policy. Where it is not reasonably practicable to give 30-days' notice, the employee is required to give as much notice as possible.

REINSTATEMENT:

An employee returning from leave under this policy, and who has not exceeded the 12-week maximum leave period allowed, will be returned to the same job or a job equivalent to the job the

employee held before going on FMLA leave. An employee who has not exceeded the 26-week maximum leave period in a single 12-month period, allowed to care for a seriously ill or injured covered military member, will be returned to the same job or a job equivalent to the job the employee held before going on leave.

If an employee is placed in a different position, it will be one with equivalent status, pay, benefits, and other employment terms and which entails substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority.

The county has no obligation to reinstate an employee who takes more than the 12 weeks of leave allowed under this policy, or who elects not to return to work after using the maximum leave allowed, including an employee with available sick or vacation leave.

REPAYMENT OF BENEFITS:

Unless an employee is unable to return to work because of the serious medical condition of the employee or an eligible family member, or another situation beyond the control of the employee, an employee who does not return to work after using the maximum leave allowed under this policy will be required to reimburse the county for all medical premiums and other benefits paid by the county while the employee was on leave without pay related to their FMLA leave.

OTHER BENEFITS:

While on leave without pay under this policy, an employee does not earn vacation or sick leave, is not eligible for holiday pay, and does not earn other benefits afforded to employees actively at work, except as stated in this policy, unless other employees who go on leave without pay are allowed to do so.

An employee who is out on approved FMLA leave may not take trips outside of the county unless the travel is related to the employee's own serious health condition, the serious health condition of the child, spouse or parent of the employee or to attend qualifying military events. An employee may ask their immediate supervisor for written permission to take other trips outside of the county which may be granted at the supervisor's sole discretion.

Employees are forbidden from working another job while on approved FMLA leave from the county.

REGULATION:

Any area or issue regarding family and medical leave that is not addressed in this policy is subject to the basic requirements of the FMLA and the regulations issued to implement it.

RETURN-TO-WORK:

An employee is required to provide a fitness-for-duty certification before the employee returns to work.

ENFORCEMENT:

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer for unlawful discrimination under the FMLA. The FMLA does not affect any

federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any federal or state law that provides greater family of medical leave rights.

C. TRAVEL

2C-1 PER DIEM POLICY – TRAVEL RELATED MEALS

Overnight Travel: Employees traveling away from home overnight on County business are reimbursed at the per diem rate of \$74 for travel related meal expenses. Receipts are not required for reimbursement of travel meals.

First and last days of travel will be reimbursed at 75% = \$55.50 of the per diem.

The Return Date is the Last Day of the Conference/Event.

Full Days at Conference/Event will be reimbursed at 100% = \$74 of the per diem.

If you event/conference or hotel provides meals, these will be deducted from your daily rates. Breakfast is \$18, Lunch is \$20, and Dinner is \$36. Agendas are required and we cannot process your request without the agenda.

Requests for per diem must be received by or before 10 a.m. on Monday preceding the week of the Conference/Event. If that Monday is a holiday, Requests for Per Diem must be received by or before 10 a.m. on Friday two weeks preceding the Conference/Event. Per diem payments will not be issued more than 1 month prior to the conference start date.

Per diems will be issued for the first day of travel, not to exceed one day before the conference or required committee meeting.

Requests made after the time period set forth above will be handled at the same per diem rates. However, while such requests will still require completion of a Request for Per Diem, they will probably not be paid until after the conference due to budgetary time constraints due to their late submission.

Non-Overnight Travel: Hill County does not reimburse for meals when the employee does not travel overnight as the meals would be considered taxable compensation to the employee.

In certain situations defined by IRS, non-taxable meals may be provided where employees do not travel overnight. Those meals may be reimbursed by Hill County if actual receipts are produced and the condition meets the IRS criteria for non-taxable meals. See IRS Fringe Benefit Guide for Federal, State and Local Governments – Publication 5137.

Hill County does not reimburse for meals when considered taxable by the IRS.

2C-2 LODGING

Overnight Travel: Hill County pays for lodging for Employees traveling away from home for conferences overnight on County business. Lodging for conferences will be paid for the host hotel or an equivalent hotel, not to exceed \$214. Amounts in excess of \$214 will be paid by the employee or you can obtain approval through Commissioners Court for the higher rate due to your circumstances. The Court order is needed if you are exceeding the limit.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of the Hill County Employee Handbook that outlines my benefits and obligations as a County employee. I understand that I am responsible for reading and familiarizing myself with the information in this manual and understand that it contains general personnel policies of the County. If I need clarification on any of the information in this manual, I will contact my immediate supervisor.

I further understand that the Hill County Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment. I understand that I am an at will employee and that my employment may be terminated by either myself or the County, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

I understand that this employee handbook is intended to provide guidance in understanding Hill County’s policies, practices and benefits. I understand that Hill County retains the right to change this handbook at any time, and to modify or cancel any of its employee benefits when the need for change is recognized.

I further understand that as a Hill County employee, I am expected to provide quality service to the public; to work towards the highest degree of safety possible for my fellow workers, to continually make suggestions for improvements, and to display a spirit of team work and cooperation.

I understand that I may be subject to reasonable suspicion or post-accident drug and alcohol testing. If I am required to have a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) for my county position, I will be subject to random, reasonable suspicion and post-accident drug and alcohol testing.

I have read these policies and understand these policies and I agree to abide by and adhere to these policies.

Signature of Employee

Printed Name of Employee

Date Signed

Date of Handbook Approved in Commissioner Court: 2.27.24

RESOLUTION FOR HILL COUNTY

I the undersigned, have read the Hill County Employee Handbook that the Hill County Commissioners' Court has adopted. As an ELECTED OFFICIAL of Hill County, I endorse and approve the Employee Handbook. I approve the document as it reflects my commitment to Hill County employees and it reflects my commitment to conform to appropriate state and federal laws.

I agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Hill County Employee Handbook, as witnessed by my signature below.

Signature of Elected Official

Title of Elected Official

Printed Name of Elected Official

Date Signed

Date of Handbook Approved in Commissioner Court: 2.27.2024